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ABSTRACT

This resource/training document addresses innovative employment strategies for individuals with disabilities and their implications for rehabilitation, and provides information on model programs to assist state rehabilitation agencies, employers, and potential employers to identify effective strategies and networks to develop cooperative programs for placing persons who are disabled in gainful employment. The document is designed to illustrate the benefits of collaboration and networking in the areas of employment services and increased quality employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The document begins with a history of the evolution of employment services in rehabilitation. It then reviews challenges facing rehabilitation agencies and discusses approaches to the delivery of employment services. Strategies in employer services are described, such as disability awareness, employment options, marketing outreach, accommodations, disability management, career development, accessibility, safety, and follow up. A final chapter outlines use of the document, and appendixes list study group members. (Contains approximately 40 references.) (JDD)

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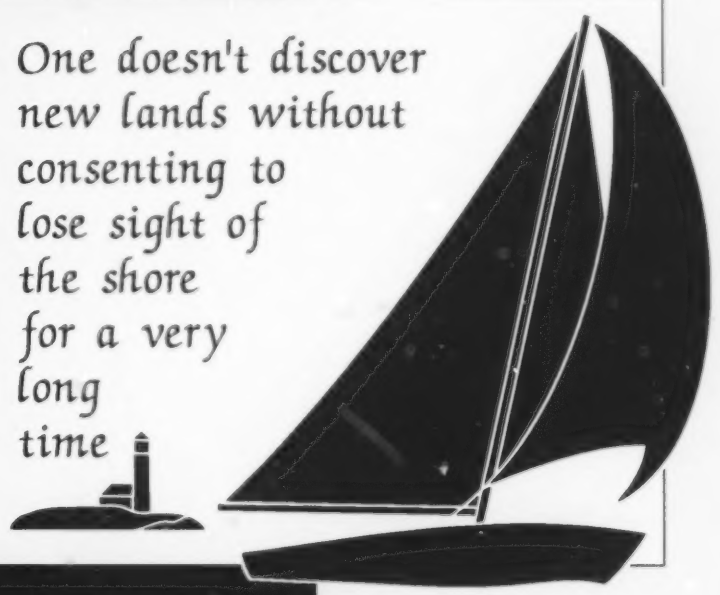

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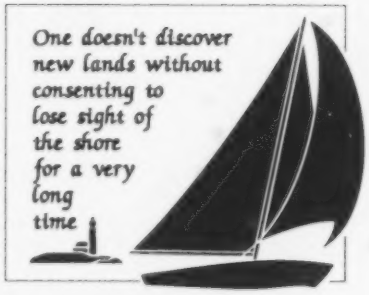

ABOUT THE COVER

The quotation used on the cover of this publication was taken from the following source:
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Report from the Study Group on

Employer Service Strategies in Rehabilitation

Eighteenth Institute on Rehabilitation Issues
Memphis, Tennessee
October 1991

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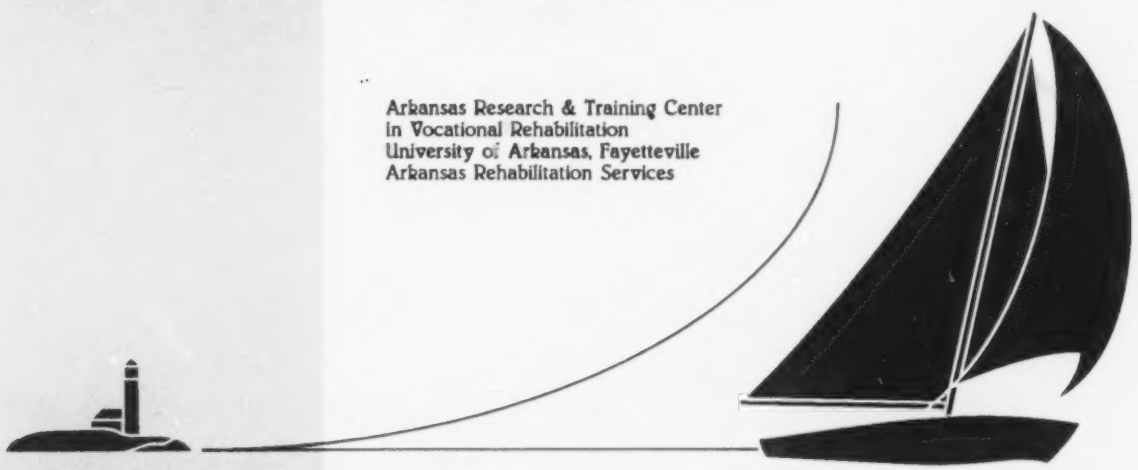

CONTENTS

Chairperson's Comments v

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study 1

Chapter 2: History and Evolution of Employment Services in Rehabilitation .. 5

Chapter 3: Challenges Facing Rehabilitation Agencies 13

Chapter 4: Approaches to the Delivery of Employment Services 25

Chapter 5: Strategies in Employer Services 39

Chapter 6: Use of the Document 61

References 67

Appendices 73

IRI Prime Study Group
IRI Total Study Group

The IRI Prime Study Group on Employer Service Strategies was faced with a definite challenge. The mission was to present and discuss selected programs and models from a large number of employer projects which were designed to place persons with disabilities in gainful employment. This group was enthusiastic and excited about the possibilities these programs offered in terms of employment opportunities for persons who were at one time considered unemployable. The passage of recent legislation with emphasis on new clientele, priorities and mandates opens doors to jobs that were at one time only dreams to consumers, advocates and providers of services to individuals with severe disabilities.

Members of both the Prime Study Group and the Total Study Group were professionals who combined their efforts in preparing these materials. Ideas and suggestions were freely shared along with a generous amount of constructive criticism which have resulted in a user friendly document.

Sincere appreciation is extended to Prime Study Group members who accepted the responsibility for writing and rewriting the different chapters. These members were:

Reed Greenwood Fayetteville, AR	Barbara Blackwell Madison, WI
Debbie Herr Kansas City, MO	Dianne Childers Baton Rouge, LA
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Sincere thanks are extended to Dr. B. Doug Rice of the University of Arkansas Research and Training Center in Vocational Rehabilitation for his support and leadership during the study. We are indebted to Lou Tabor, Ruth Gullett, Janice Irwin and Sandra Parkerson of the Research and Training Center who devoted many hours preparing this document for printing and dissemination.

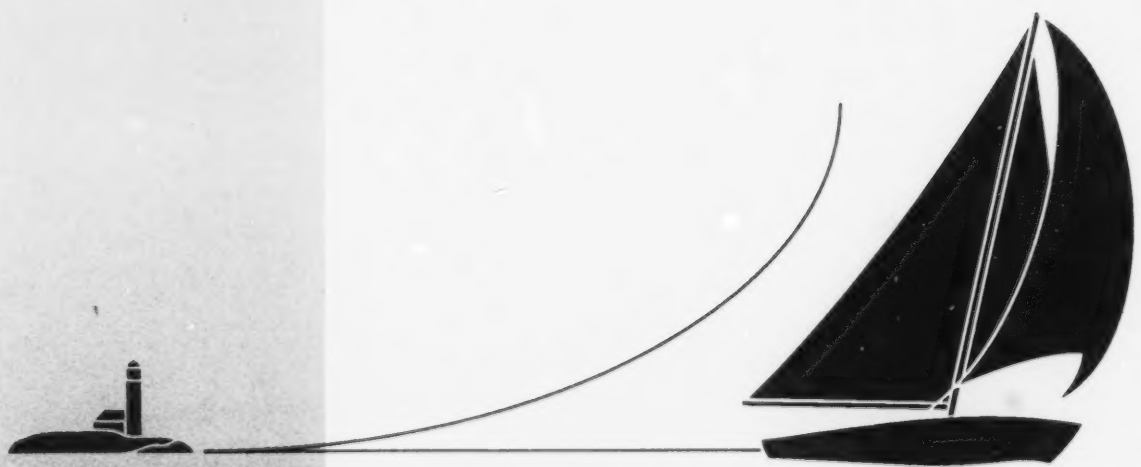
We have attempted to address the relevant issues and related implications in this document. We hope it will be of benefit to rehabilitation professionals in planning, implementing and providing significant and meaningful services to both consumers and employers.

It was my pleasure to work with this group over a period of time to develop a document of this nature and magnitude. My participation as Chairperson of this Study Group was indeed one of the high points of my rehabilitation career.

Robert C. Hope
Chairperson

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study



Introduction to the Study

'One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.' This passage, by Andre Gide in *The Counterfeiters* (1925), eloquently describes the intangible element of the commitment of many individuals and organizations in bringing innovations in employer services into existence. It is an element that will not be described in this document; however, it is one that is critical to the task of achieving employment for persons with disabilities in the American workplace.

The willingness of individuals and organizations to leave behind the security of present methods and techniques and seek success through the untried has been the reason for gains in employer services. It requires a strong commitment to challenges, work, and frustration. This is not an easy task but one that can be accomplished if professionals are open to looking at innovative methods to placement.

Need for the Study

The past decade has witnessed a tremendous change in the American workforce with a shift from manufacturing to a service/information base. Norwood (1986) states that less than 20 percent of the working population today are in manufacturing, and of the two million new jobs that will be created in the future, 90 percent will be in service and information. Other factors that will have an impact upon the labor force are an increasing number of older workers, a large number of working women, immigrants, foreign competition, and technological developments. These trends, along with home-based employment, flex-time, shared jobs and entrepreneurship indicate a strong need for new and innovative approaches in placement strategies for individuals with severe disabilities. The fact that this topic was recommended by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) as an issue for an Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) study supports the need for innovative approaches to placement for those served through vocational rehabilitation. It is evident that the labor force will change significantly in the not too distant future and will have a definite impact on all aspects of employment. The 14th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (Rice & Williams, 1987, p. iii), *The Future Workplace: Implications for Rehabilitation* states:

> It is evident that most work and most worksites in the 21st century will be vastly different from those in existence today. In fact, many futurists predict that a very large number of present jobs will be obsolete and service industries will be primary employers. Among other major changes, employees will be better educated and trained, much work will be done from home, workers will have a

voice in management and major growth areas will continue to be in the sunbelt. Nevertheless, despite all the promises of a great future, there will be difficulty.

Purpose of the Study

This document will illustrate the benefits of collaboration and networking in bringing about significant developments in the areas of employment services and increased quality employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The programs referred to in this study represent those which combine vision and commitment to bring about something which is innovative. They represent a restructure of the present and combine this with a new perspective on the opportunities afforded in a changing world. The world has not been standing still through this century. Technological advances in medical, scientific and engineering fields, along with social and economic developments have had continuous impact on employer services and on the employment of individuals with disabilities. Service providers and consumer organizations have been in transition throughout this time period and have responded at times by standing still or by adapting or changing. It is the latter course which has been most beneficial in achieving gains and advances toward the desired outcome of increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Nevertheless, rehabilitation agencies will need to increase efforts to develop employer relationships and new jobs for persons who are disabled. It is a challenge and it is one that must be met.

Charges to the IRI Study Group

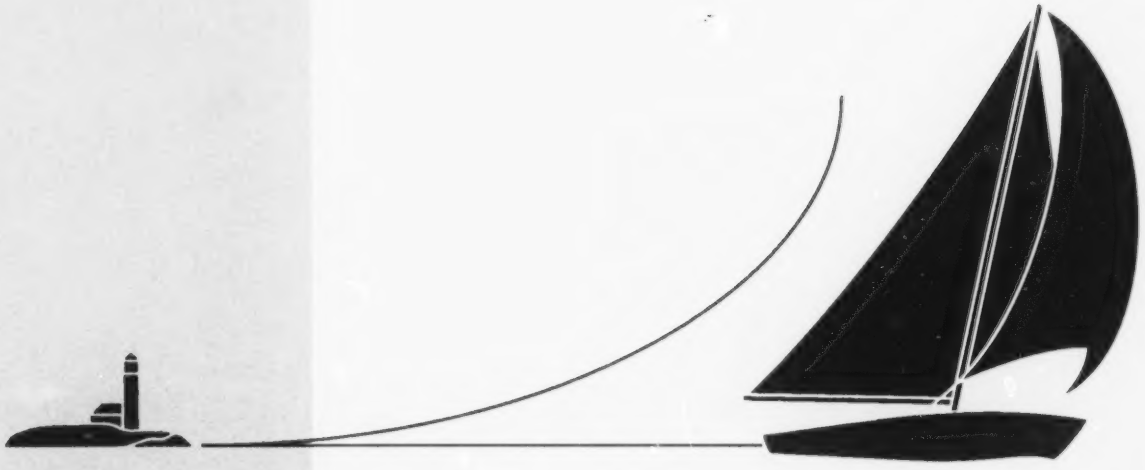
The national IRI Executive Committee, after a review of many topics, selected Innovative Employer Service Strategies in Rehabilitation as one of three major issues for study by the 18th IRI. The following charges were developed for the Prime Study Group:

1. To develop a resource/training document that addresses innovative employment strategies for individuals with disabilities and their implications for rehabilitation; and

2. To provide current information, including model programs that will assist state rehabilitation agencies, employers, and potential employers in identifying effective strategies and networks to develop cooperative programs for placing persons who are disabled in gainful employment.

Chapter 2

History & Evolution of Employment Services in Rehabilitation



History and Evolution of Employment Services in Rehabilitation

Objectives

Provide an overview of significant economic, technological and social developments and describe the effect and impact of relevant legislation and/or events on employment services.

Provide insight into the relationship between vocational rehabilitation and employers regarding services for persons with disabilities.

Determine the present position of vocational rehabilitation in relation to employment services by a study of past related events and forces in order to develop objectives for future planning.

Encourage professionals in rehabilitation related agencies to examine their position on employment services.

Summary

The chapter reviews the impact of legislative, social, economic, and technological developments on employment services. These factors have made it possible for vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies and consumer organizations to achieve significant gains for employment of persons with disabilities through the 20th Century.

The sustained efforts of individuals with disabilities, service providers, advocates, employers, and others have made significant contributions to these increased employment opportunities. This review traces the development of these advances from program inception at the beginning of the century through this decade. It is evident that employment services have not stood still but further innovations will be necessary to secure additional success in the future.

Discussion

By examining the evolution of employment services, insight can be gained into both the positive and negative changes that have occurred. Historically, placement has been the ultimate objective of services provided to persons with disabilities through the state/federal program of VR (Corthell & Boone, 1982). It is this major factor that distinguishes VR from other related human services programs.

The Early Years

The Smith-Hughes Act (P.L. 347) created the Federal Board for Vocational Education, and the Soldier Rehabilitation Act of 1918 (P.L. 178) broadened the role of this board to include services to veterans of World War I who only needed retraining.

The Smith-Fess Act of 1920 (P.L. 66-236) is considered the beginning of the Civilian Rehabilitation Program in the United States. States were to provide vocational training to civilians as an extension of the Vocational Education Program. Annual, renewable funds were to be distributed on a 50/50 matching basis, and were to be used only for guidance, training, adjustment, and placement services for individuals who were physically disabled with no provision for physical restoration or social rehabilitation. Client eligibility was based on age, physical disability and reasonable expectation. Job objectives and plans were to be developed with follow-up services provided during training and after job placement. Placement was defined as the process of matching a client to a job with no work adjustment or skills training involved. Individuals who were lacking the appropriate personal and/or social skills were considered not feasible for services (Oberman, 1965).

During the industrial age of the 1920's the importance of vocational guidance in achieving skills and knowledge necessary for obtaining or retaining employment became an important factor. It was apparent that major job losses and employer concerns were more related to unacceptable personal and social behaviors, attitudes, and poor work habits than a lack of specific work skills. Because of the Great Depression of the 1930's, jobs were limited and were almost nonexistent for persons with disabilities including the economically and socially disadvantaged. Therefore, unions began to organize and issue challenges to employers concerning work conditions. Because of the lack of jobs and financial losses of individuals and businesses, the humanitarian age emerged. There was greater government intervention in all areas of life in an attempt to correct the problems of this period (Rusalem & Malikin, 1976).

The Federal Social Security Act of 1935 (P.L. 271) strengthened public rehabilitation financially and provided a legal basis for its permanent status. Until this legislation, VR had been a temporary program which was renewed annually. The Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936 (P.L. 732) established vending stand programs for persons who were blind by giving them priority for operating their businesses in federal buildings with many states giving this population the same privileges in state owned buildings.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1943 (P.L. 78-113)

(better known as the Barden-LaFollette Act) established a broader definition of VR by providing for any services determined necessary for the employment of persons with disabilities. These additional services included physical restoration (surgery, hospitalization, etc.), transportation, occupational licenses, occupational tools/equipment, and maintenance for training and placement. VR services for persons with mental illness, mental retardation, and blindness were established (Bitter, 1984).

The early years of VR reflect that services were usually for clients who were physically disabled. Counselors provided minimal counseling to clients for employment services while few services were provided to the employer.

The Middle Years

There were many changes taking place during the 1950's that had direct impact on the future direction of VR. There was even some discussion regarding the elimination of the vocational component from the basic rehabilitation program. In this time frame, the independent living movement also began to emerge. Psychotropic medication also resulted in the earlier release of persons with mental illness from institutions, thus, increasing the need for services. During this time, work adjustment training, on-the-job training (OJT), and vocational training programs in the public schools were other emerging trends.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1954, as amended, (P.L. 83-565) made provisions for funds for research and professional staff training, a comprehensive plan to expand rehabilitation facilities, an increased financial base for funding, matching funds of 75/25 for improvement of existing buildings used for rehabilitation, establishment of special programs for the mentally retarded, and provisions for special caseloads for certain disabilities.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1965, as amended, (P.L. 89-333) made available grant funds for improved service delivery programs, extended evaluation and services for persons who were severely disabled. Further matching funds on a 75/25 basis were available for the extension and improvement of existing physical rehabilitation facilities. The 1965 Amendments also provided for establishment of sheltered workshops, allowance for use of federal funds to match local participation, creation of a cooperative fund program with school systems, and establishment of an architectural compliance board.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1967, as amended, (P.L. 90-99) and 1968 (P.L. 90-391) provided for construction of new rehabilitation facilities, post-employment services and services to family members of persons with disabilities. Ratios for matching state/federal funds increased to 80/20.

The preceding legislation created the Projects with Industry (PWI) program which encouraged cooperative working relationships between business, industry, and rehabilitation. This, in turn, increased the importance of placement activities (Rice & McMillion, 1983).

The congressional concern for people with disabilities has spanned some 70 years. VR has been the agency used to provide placement services for these clients by attempting to motivate the employer to hire a specific client for a particular job. The end of the postwar years reflects the first attempt by congress to create a project that would provide for a cooperative relationship between the VR agency and the business/industry community to provide employment services to individuals who were disabled. In the postwar years, VR counselors worked with clients who were physically and/or mentally disabled as well as a greater number of economically and socially disadvantaged individuals. Therefore, more complex community services and varied counseling techniques were required. Counselors became involved in advocacy programs and the interdisciplinary team approach; however, specific employment services for the employer had not been a consideration.

The Recent Years

During the period from 1970 to the present, employer services have developed against a background of great social change and technological advances. It has been a time of social action and the age of the computer. In conjunction with these developments, employment services have made significant advances for increased employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

This has been a time of legislative gains and innovations in programming concepts. Specific legislation has been passed at the beginning and at the end of this period which defines the rights of individuals with disabilities (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, & Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990).

The technological developments which have occurred during this period have greatly expanded the employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through the removal of barriers in the work place. Assistive technology and job accommodations have enabled individuals to achieve employment.

Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination of individuals with disabilities by recipients of federal financial assistance. Also significantly affecting employment services was the establishment of a priority on providing services to those individuals determined to be severely disabled. These provisions established an environment which created an increase in opportunities for employment and a shift in emphasis on the part of service providers. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, put in place the Individualized Written

Rehabilitation Program (IWRP) which establishes a cooperative relationship in the development of plans for rehabilitation services between client and counselor.

A programmatic innovation which has made a significant contribution toward enhancing employment outcomes for persons with disabilities is supported employment. Supported employment provides for on-the-job delivery of vocational and support services to individuals who may not have been able to achieve and retain competitive employment. The benefits to persons with severe disabilities proved to be dramatic and demonstrated the potential for such programming. The Twelfth IRI, *Supported Employment: Implications for Rehabilitation* (Rice & Pankowski, 1985), describes the supported employment program and its implications for the delivery of rehabilitation services. Supported Employment success has been a direct result of the innovation in the service program and the relationships with the employment community.

During this time PWI was established through the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rice & McMillion, 1983). The PWI program emphasizes a close and cooperative relationship between the public and private sectors. It is this relationship of employer, consumer, and service provider which has contributed to the success of this program.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) greatly expanded the civil rights of persons with disabilities. The protection against discrimination of individuals with disabilities was expanded to the private sector.

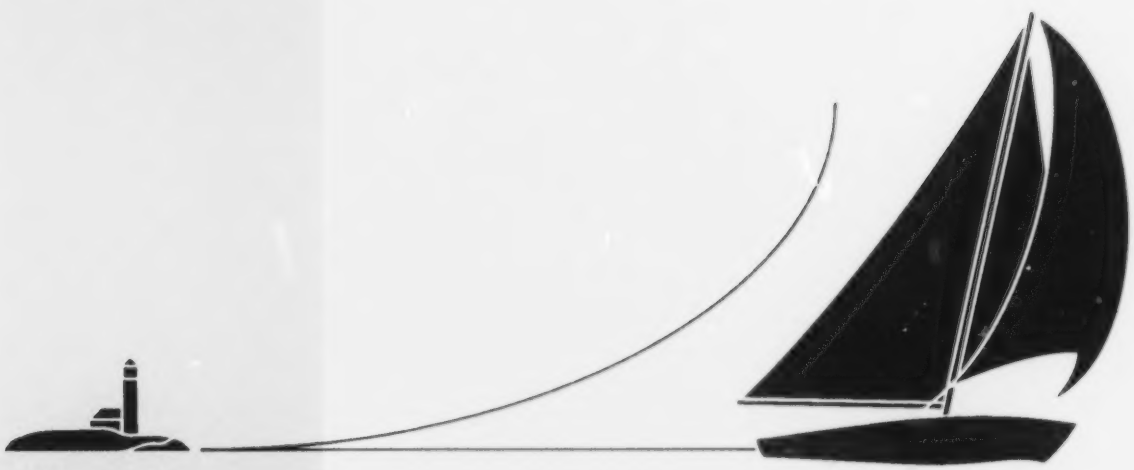
Historically, employment service providers practiced individual job placement through two means. The first involved contacting employers on behalf of specific job ready clients in order to locate and secure employment. The second involved what has been termed job development. Through job development, service providers established contacts with community employers in order to identify present and future job openings.

Implications

The technological developments, new legislation, and a changing labor market provide promise for those who seek to bring employment service into practice. Throughout this century, individuals and organizations have been creative in developing new programs and strategies to improve employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It appears that this movement will continue at an even greater pace in the future in view of events that have occurred in the recent past.

Chapter 3

Challenges Facing Rehabilitation Agencies



Challenges Facing Rehabilitation Agencies

Objectives

Identify emerging service trends in rehabilitation particularly in the field of employer services.

Analyze implications for changes in rehabilitation and relationships with employers.

Discuss the populations that will be served by rehabilitation agencies and the impact the clientele will have on the delivery of services.

Summary

There are several issues in VR that will need to be addressed in the coming years by state agency administrators and/or directors. The implementation of ADA will demand that VR agencies support, educate and provide technical assistance to employers and businesses. It will be necessary to provide leadership to insure equal access for all persons with disabilities. VR agencies will need to provide directions in recognizing persons from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to insure equal access to rehabilitation programs and services. Agencies will need to pay attention to staff training that emphasizes special knowledge and skills for personnel to assure the provision of the most appropriate services to individuals with severe disabilities.

Discussion

There are many challenges facing rehabilitation agencies and related organizations as the 21st Century approaches. As indicated previously, legislation, new populations, changing work forces and approaches/methods will impact service delivery, especially for persons with severe disabilities. This chapter reviews a number of programs that will assist in meeting many of these challenges.

Human Resource Development

The Human Resource Development (HRD) approach emphasizes the need for continuous improvement of rehabilitation personnel. Its' development and implementation must be systematic, planned, and followed in a consistent and forceful manner. The HRD model is an initiative of the RSA and many state VR agencies. It emphasizes the need for development, education, skill acquisition and retention.

Qualified Staff for Employer Services

State and regional assessments indicated a critical need for use of new technologies in training rehabilitation personnel to ensure the greatest impact from the limited amount of available funds.

Additional information from the states and RSA report training needs in such areas as chronic mental illness, multiple disabilities, substance abuse, AIDS, and dual diagnosed disabilities among others. Training needs may vary because of high Hispanic, Asian, or Native American populations as well as cultural, economic or geographical factors. Further, most state VR agencies and other service providers have personnel with limited, or no, rehabilitation background who are in need of training.

Rehabilitation Education Programs

Evidence exists that shows a need to train individuals to work in most areas of VR including facilities, field programs, independent living centers (ILCs), supported employment, and client assistance programs (CAPs). The challenge facing rehabilitation educators indicates a critical need to recruit undergraduate students who are bilingual, minorities, and able to work with various cultures. Rehabilitation educators need to develop courses of study that accommodate currently employed personnel while attracting new students into the field.

The escalating cost of higher education necessitates that consideration be given to the establishment of associate degree/certificate programs to encourage individuals to enter the rehabilitation field and to meet the critical needs identified by providers of services with exceedingly low budgets.

Careers in Rehabilitation

In 1990 RSA sought suggestions for creative and innovative approaches for promoting careers in rehabilitation from state and regional offices. Respondents' recommendations related to steps for individual staff members to promote careers in rehabilitation, while other comments related to action for RSA, VR agencies, CAPs, ILCs, rehabilitation facilities, and others to encourage students to enter the field.

Rehabilitation needs to review, evaluate, and revise personnel policies, salary structures and available career paths to ensure that they can attract and retain qualified staff. Further, a marketing strategy must be developed to address secondary schools and colleges by targeting educational components to coordinate and provide services for individuals with disabilities. Efforts should be made to target older workers, especially those who are planning a second career. One

priority for the recruitment of minority and culturally diverse students could include targeting historically Black colleges and universities.

Special Initiatives

Challenges to RSA have developed during recent years regarding services to individuals who have traumatic brain injuries, chronic mental illness, specific learning disabilities, and youth who are substance abusers. These initiatives point out critical needs within the field of VR. RSA must initiate a reasonable approach to special initiatives and then maintain a two-to-five year response. This will enable effective development, education, and training in response to each initiative.

Assistive Technology

Technology and work with business and industry will be essential. VR staff must provide the maximum opportunity for clients to realize their full potential for independence within the community. This can be enhanced with continuing education of rehabilitation personnel in the most current applications of assistive technology.

Supervision and Administration

Rehabilitation would be remiss if the need for continuing education in the areas of supervision and administration of rehabilitation programs was not emphasized. Personnel projections cite turnover through attrition and retirement, requiring the preparation of persons for leadership positions.

Expansion of Employment Opportunities

The increased needs of business/industry and the importance of matching the individual's abilities to the demands of the work environment will facilitate employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. A number of specific recommendations can be made in the areas of marketing, placement, documentation and policy planning.

Marketing

A major marketing campaign should be designed to include the following:

Increased opportunities for people with disabilities to become more active participants in selecting training activities and jobs

Increased employment opportunities in high-growth areas such as services, information and manufacturing

Increased social integration of employees with disabilities in the work setting

Placement

Specific recommendations in the area of placement include the following:

Emphasis on the concept that adults with disabilities can be productive workers

Integration of the employee with a disability into the environment of the workplace

Increased advocacy for job opportunities for individuals with severe disabilities

Documentation

An essential component of good marketing/placement efforts is the documentation of the changes that occur to the individual, business/industry and society as a result of employment. A number of specific documentation efforts should be developed including the following:

Collection of transitional, supported and competitive employment data to uniformly document changes in the placement trends and benefits realized through the employment of adults with disabilities

State and local evaluation systems to provide longitudinal data on employment

Policy Planning

In addition to increased awareness and employment opportunities, rehabilitation organizations will need to emphasize quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Policy planning on the part of VR agencies will need to integrate the issues of quality of life with economic achievement. The following issues need to be considered:

Changing population trends and their impact on national, regional and local levels of the labor force

Changing role of the workplace for all workers

Development of fiscal health, social and emotional incentives for adults with disabilities, their families, industry, and society that will promote independence

Severe Disability

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandates services to individuals with the most severe disabilities on a priority basis. To meet this mandate, many states have now implemented an Order of Selection process which specifies priority of services to those individuals that meet this criteria. It is evident that more individuals are surviving illnesses and injuries that heretofore would have been terminal. These persons, however, present a greater challenge to rehabilitation professionals to provide appropriate services usually at greater costs over longer periods of time.

Advocacy

The gains and accomplishments of service providers, families, clients and others serving as advocates for people with disabilities are well documented as indicated in the services now provided to this sector of the population. Such programs as Independent Living, Supported Employment and Transition from School to Work, among others, have proven successful in placing many people with disabilities into gainful employment. Several legislative mandates have enhanced services to this population, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and ADA. The IWRP, which requires full client participation in the rehabilitation program, was a landmark in advancing the rights and dignities of people with disabilities. The effects of ADA are just now being felt throughout the country. It will be some time before the full impact of this legislation reaches all sectors of American business, industry and the general public.

Education and Awareness

Many people continue to harbor misconceptions and beliefs about people with disabilities. In recent years, much has been done through the media, public awareness programs, educational efforts, civic organizations and other promotional/educational activities to combat these adverse beliefs and to correct false information.

It is, however, evident that much remains to be done to educate all people and to make them aware that an individual with a disability can live and function in all aspects of everyday life, including competing successfully in the labor market.

Americans With Disabilities Act

ADA was drafted in 1988 and signed into law by the President in 1990. In summary this law requires businesses and governments to make adjustments for employees with disabilities in the following areas.

Employment

Transportation

Public services

Public accommodations

Telecommunications

The law covers all aspects of an employee's hiring, firing, training, promotion and benefits. Not only are people with physical disabilities protected, but also rehabilitated alcoholics, drug addicts and people with AIDS. The law is specific in that an employee who is able to perform the 'essential functions' of the job cannot be discriminated against because of a disability. Pre-employment medical examinations to screen for disabilities, job-related medical exams, and drug testing are prohibited. Further, ADA asks employers to make reasonable accommodations to employ workers with handicaps. However, an employer does not have to hire a candidate who is disabled if the job poses the direct possibility of harm to the employee, or if the person is not qualified for that job. Also included in the legislation are access rules that apply to buildings used by the public which began in January of 1992 for buildings housing 25 or more workers. The access rules apply to all businesses and government buildings that serve the public with the exception of private homes and owner-occupied inns with less than six rooms. The Act further mandates accessibility to restaurants, grocery and retail stores, car dealerships, small offices and other small businesses in order that people with mobility impairments can move about freely.

Although ADA has several Titles, only a summary of Title I is presented here since it addresses employment, the theme of this document. In order to fully comprehend the scope of this legislation, it is suggested that the Act be reviewed in its entirety.

Employment Trends

Employment trends through the 1990s demonstrated a definite challenge for VR professionals in the placement and career development of persons with disabilities. Demographics, technology, education, and socioeconomics are

employment areas in which the greatest number of changes are occurring. These changes and their interactions, in all probability, will produce the most significant challenges to employment in the 1990s.

Demographics

The 14th IRI (Rice & Williams, 1987), *The Future Workplace: Implications for Rehabilitation*, reported that many demographic changes occurring in this country are particularly related to employment. As an example there are now more women working, and it is predicted by the Year 2000 that women will account for 47 percent of the work force. Equal pay for women and comprehensive child care legislation are topics being forced into congressional debate as a result of more women entering the labor market.

Another demographic change is the projection that minorities—especially Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians—will account for 34 of every 100 first time workers entering the workforce during the 1990s. Immigration from Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean will continue to increase. It is also predicted that there will be a sharp rise in the Hispanic population in the United States creating culture, language, and health care problems as a result of the increase in this population.

The aging workforce must also be considered as a result of an increase in health problems, disabilities, and the need for more rehabilitation and health care services. Conversely, there will be fewer young workers in the labor force because of the lower birth rates in the United States. Longer life spans and a decline in younger individuals entering the workforce will create a significant increase in the average age of the labor force.

Technology

Technology, specifically personal computers and robotics, has produced significant increases in production and profits. Computers have provided many opportunities for people with disabilities to use home-based employment, flex time, job sharing, and part-time work. On the negative side is the possibility of lower incomes and loss of fringe benefits. Although technical and computer-related jobs are lucrative employment fields they will not offer most of the available jobs. In contrast the health care field is expected to be the largest employment field of the future because of medical technology which has dramatically increased the life span of all individuals including those with disabilities.

Robotics have been used effectively in manufacturing, especially for welding and painting. Although there is the possibility that robots will replace some workers, they offer opportunity for individuals to improve and upgrade their

work skills, thereby increasing wages. Flexibility at the workshop will be of utmost importance.

Technology will provide opportunities for more individuals who are disabled to enter the labor force replacing other workers who will need retraining and assistance in acquiring employment. The positive results here will override the negative results.

Education

Rehabilitation professionals will need to recognize the significance of education. The trend in the labor force is a shift from the physical/labor arena to intellectual and high tech ability. Advanced education by people with disabilities will be necessary for the higher salaried positions, especially in the professional, technical, and managerial fields. Education will need to be combined with adaptability, reasoning and generalizing skills, communication, and basic employment skills. Some past problems of people with disabilities involved accessing educational opportunities, lack of integration, and prejudice. The trend toward the realization of human potential and concern for employees' needs will greatly increase the acceptance of people with disabilities in the workplace.

Socioeconomics

Socioeconomic trends will greatly impact the future workforce. Because of the change from an industrial to a service and information system, and the change from a national to an international market, there will be an increase in new jobs in new businesses. The majority of the jobs predicted for the 1990s require little physical ability. The increase in service jobs broadens the number of possible jobs for persons who are developmentally disabled. The labor shortages that are forecast will result in employers searching for new sources of potential employees, which will be of benefit to all disability groups.

Many people with disabilities may be able to interface entrepreneurial activities with home-based employment. Since women are forming more small businesses, especially in the information, electronics, and service sectors, employment opportunities for women with disabilities will be greatly increased.

Financial deterrents such as loss of benefits due to employment present a dilemma for people with disabilities. Recent changes in legislation allow people with disabilities to work without losing all of their social security benefits. The law permits individuals to earn an income and still receive all or a portion of their monthly Social Security Income (SSI) payments. Although they are not receiving a monthly SSI check, the law enables people with disabilities to keep their medicaid benefits as long as they are needed. Because these laws offer assistance and

encouragement for people to maintain employment, they are called work incentives. These incentives allow people with disabilities adequate financial security and health benefits whether they are employed or not.

Insurance coverage is also an inhibitor to employment as is workers' compensation. ADA is important legislation that has provided equal access to the labor force. Disability management will continue to be emphasized because of its financial benefits and investment in maintaining a trained competent staff. Public VR agencies will be used for disability management programs that promote good health, prevention, and return-to-work programs.

Quality of Life Issues

There is no doubt that quality of life will be the human services issue of the 1990s, although there has been no consensus on how to best define and measure it. The task is not only to examine the quality of life of the whole person but to examine what constitutes the quality of work-life for all persons including those with disabilities. Independent living, supported housing, attendant services, transportation, and supported employment are some of the quality of life issues directly related to people with disabilities.

Independent Living

The independent living philosophy acknowledges that people with disabilities are capable and dignified human beings. They are to have integrated access, employment, housing, medical care, transportation, and recreation. ILCs and VR agencies offer skills-training in many areas related to transportation, housing, income management, medical issues, attendant care, peer counseling, and advocacy.

Supported Housing

Clients have the right to live in housing of their own choice. There is a variety of support systems available through HUD, Medicaid, and Supported Living Programs.

Attendant Services

Personal care for people with disabilities can range from bathing, toileting, dressing, and meal preparation to simple household tasks. Consumers are provided education by ILCs, VR counselors, and others. in the training and employment of attendants who are under their supervision. Many vocational rehabilitation agencies have programs offering limited funding for attendant care.

Transportation

For competitive employment and for full integration into society, transportation is critical. It was considered important enough to be made a major component of Title II of the ADA. In rural areas where public transportation is not available, home-based employment can offer opportunities for competitive employment. Technology, such as personal computers, broadens the opportunities for home-based employment as a viable option for people with disabilities, and vocational rehabilitation professionals can be especially creative in this area.

Supported Employment

Supported Employment services are offered to individuals who need support in accessing a job, intensive training services on the job, and intensive follow-along services in order to obtain or maintain employment. These supported employment services and technology are provided and funded through VR agencies and other adult service providers.

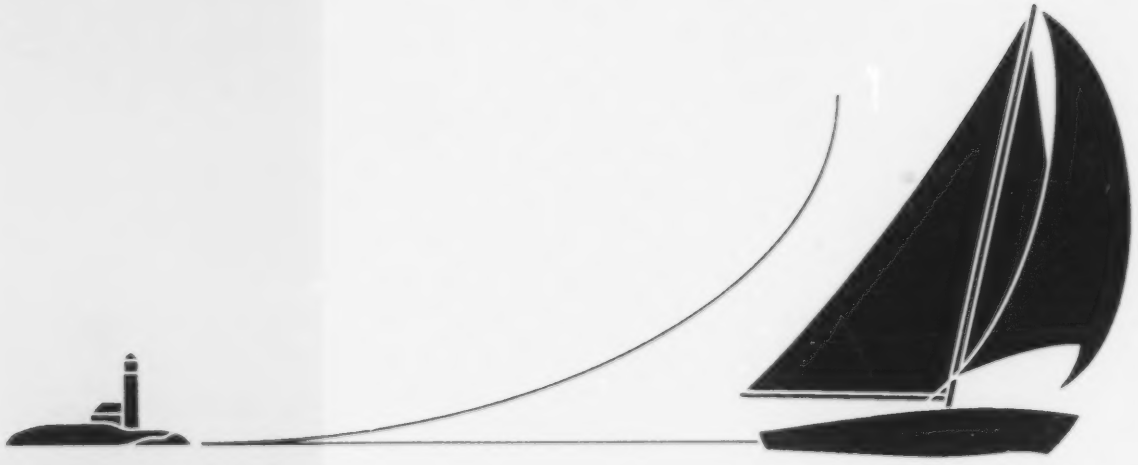
Implications

Because of a more highly educated/trained, aging, and mobile work force, VR will be challenged to develop and adapt programs to address the rapidly changing needs of people with disabilities, business, and industry. VR agencies will need to implement training related to technology, information, and services. Because of the multiple job changes expected, interpersonal skills will be considered as vital to employment as the required specific vocational skills.

The future for people with disabilities will be both promising and challenging. Opportunities for employment are being created for people with disabilities, and technology is being used to promote personal growth and job success. The implication for VR agencies over the next two decades will be to use these opportunities and technologies to ensure continued independence, productivity, and community integration for people with disabilities.

Chapter 4

Approaches to the Delivery of Employment Services



Approaches to the Delivery of Employment Services

Objectives

Review the diverse elements associated with employer services by rehabilitation organizations.

Describe a variety of service delivery models available in employer services.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of a variety of considerations in the development of employer services. Beginning with a review of the diversity of the market place in regard to both employers and consumers, the chapter addresses a number of service delivery models that can be utilized in employer services, including entrepreneurial, PWI, consumer organizations, ILCs, private rehabilitation, the Job Training Partnership Act, federal initiatives, and state programs.

Discussion

The state-federal VR system has completed seventy years of experience in the employment of people with disabilities. As one of the longest continuing partnership programs linking state and federal governments to serve workers with disabilities, this program continues to prepare and place millions in productive employment. Over the years a variety of amendments to the program have resulted in expanded services, new client service populations, and innovative programs to bring about increased labor market participation by our nation's citizens with disabilities.

Today, the programs operated through this cooperative effort continue to seek new ways to facilitate career development and employment for people with disabilities. In recent years there has been an expansion of programs designed to link VR organizations with employers and the employment community, including organized labor. These initiatives have been carried out at the national, state, and community levels and a number of these are described in this section.

Target Market Diversity of Employers and Consumers

Efficient target marketing is a significant factor necessary to develop positive employer relationships that are mutually beneficial. Several target market parameters may be utilized to identify employers who may benefit from a working

relationship with a VR service agency. This relationship will be able to provide resource information and employer services that address the needs and concerns of the identified employers.

Some specific parameters to become aware of include (a) number of employees, (b) location, (c) employer product, (d) growth, (e) stability, (f) companies that are relocating to the area, (g) community involvement, and (h) prior positive involvement with rehabilitation. The use of these parameters has proven effective in the identification of employers that are in a position to benefit from a long-term working relationship with VR agencies. Those agencies are likely to hire individuals with disabilities as employment opportunities occur.

Through information obtained from a variety of sources (economic development directors, local community employer resource persons, VR counselors, state and local business and industrial directories, and newspaper articles), and by involvement in employer oriented organizations, one becomes aware of employers that match specific parameters used in the target marketing process

Diversity of Service Delivery Models

As the Year 2000 approaches, much has been written about the needs of the labor markets of the future and what must be considered in addressing the needs. More and more rehabilitation specialists are cognizant of the many economic changes that are shaping different employment opportunities than have been experienced in the past. These changes are vitally important to workers with disabilities as they participate in career planning, either to prepare for and enter their first jobs, or to prepare for return to work after a mid-career disability experience. There are many models that are being used to facilitate the employment of this population.

Entrepreneurial

One assumption often made about people with disabilities is that they will work for someone else. However, as more and more people with disabilities look to mainstream activities, many will undoubtedly pursue the development of their own businesses or industrial operations. Entrepreneurs have been the backbone of American business and industry. Many people with disabilities have the interest and skill to pursue their own independent enterprises. Examples of entrepreneurial activity that people with disabilities have pursued are extremely varied and they run the gamut from artists (Dietl, 1988) to computer company owners (Sugawara, 1989).

A number of VR agencies are using small business development specialists

to assist clients who choose entrepreneurial opportunities. The U.S. Small Business Administration supports a series of business development programs at colleges and universities which provide training and technical assistance to individuals who are planning to establish a small business or industry. Their services address a variety of business operations such as business planning, accounting systems, marketing, and financing. More information about this program may be obtained from the U. S. Small Business Administration or the Auburn University Economic Development Institute, Auburn University, AL 36849-5112.

Projects With Industry

The PWI program is funded through the RSA. PWI has been initiated through a wide range of organizations including rehabilitation facilities, trade associations and unions. These organizations apply directly to RSA for funding in cooperation with state VR agencies. PWIs typically seek to establish a partnership approach between public and private sectors with an emphasis on the following:

> Quality linkages with employers in the private sector
>
> The ability to meet the employer's requirements for products and services
>
> Strong support from the state VR agency
>
> Active participation of the Business Advisory Council members in project operations (Rice & McMillion, 1983, p. 41)

PWIs typically emphasize one of several approaches: (a) direct job development and placement; (b) work experience through work adjustment services; (c) technical skills training; and (d) linkages between industry and rehabilitation (Rice & McMillion, 1983). An exemplary program based on the job development and placement model funded through this authority is the Arkansas Association of Rehabilitation, Industry and Business, Inc., which provides statewide job development and placement services in collaboration with the Arkansas Division of Rehabilitation Services. Information about this project may be obtained from the Project Director at 1-800-264-1011.

Consumer Organizations

Many consumer organizations are actively engaged in employment and employment-related activities to foster a more receptive employment environment for workers with disabilities. Organizations such as the American Foundation for the Blind, the Association for Retarded Citizens, and the National Epilepsy Foundation undertake programmatic efforts to increase employment

opportunities. These organizations may be very helpful in providing specific information about their constituencies and their needs in preparing for various career paths.

Independent Living Centers

Independent Living Centers are becoming more involved in employment related services, especially in advocacy for employment opportunities, technical assistance for accommodations, and awareness programs to assist employers in serving workers with disabilities. These Centers are funded through RSA and other sources and provide a number of services directed at the independent living and employment of workers with disabilities. Although their primary function is not employment, many ILCs have found the need to provide support services to their communities to enhance the services of VR agencies and other organizations due to the limited funding available to meet the need.

Private Rehabilitation

A major growth sector in the disability field has been the private, for-profit rehabilitation organization. A number of professionals including rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation nurses have been attracted to this area to work primarily with 'return-to-work' rehabilitation programs (Matkin, 1985). These specialists work in private businesses often providing services to the beneficiaries of workers' compensation, long-term disability insurance, and related programs. The emphasis in the service delivery process is on an intervention to maximize the chances of the worker returning to productive employment.

Job Training Partnership Act

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is a federally funded program to reach people who are unemployed through local employment preparation and placement initiatives. Although targeted by groups, this program may be used for workers with disabilities. Organized through local Private Industry Councils (PICs), a variety of local training programs are designed to meet labor market needs within the geographic boundaries of the PIC. Information about specific programs may be obtained directly from the PICs which are located throughout the country.

Federal Initiatives

The Federal Government, in its effort to provide equal employment opportunity for people who are disabled, developed a Selective Placement Program. The program has been expanded and strengthened through the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112, as amended) and the

Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972, as amended, which require Federal agencies to develop and implement affirmative action program plans for the hiring, placement, promotion, and retention of individuals with disabilities, including veterans who are disabled. In order to insure that all applicants receive full employment consideration, Federal agencies designate Coordinators for Selective Placement in each of their installations which have employment offices. The Coordinators provide advice and counsel concerning employment, and work with hiring officials to assure that applicants and employees with disabilities receive full consideration for all employment and promotion opportunities.

A 'handicapped' employee as defined by Federal regulations is an individual who (a) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (communication, ambulation, socialization, etc.); (b) has a record of such impairment, i.e., an individual may be completely recovered from a physical or mental impairment (included because the attitude of management and employees toward a previous impairment results in an individual experiencing difficulty in placement, employment and advancement, e.g., individuals who are mentally restored, who have a history of a heart condition, cancer, drug abuse, or alcoholism); or (c) is regarded as having such an impairment, i.e., individuals who are perceived to have disabilities, whether the impairment exists or not, and because of prejudicial attitudes held toward them or for other reasons, they are regarded by management as 'handicapped', which may then affect the individual's placement or advancement in employment.

The Federal government has established special appointing authorities for individuals who are disabled to insure that they are given an equal chance for employment. If a Federal agency is interested in hiring an individual with a disability, the following Special Appointing Authorities are available:

Competitive Appointment. Appointment is possible through competitive civil service procedures. These appointments are established by applying on an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) register, either by passing a written test (special testing is available for a person with a severe disability) or by having work experience and education evaluated without a written test to establish eligibility. Then, when filling a vacancy, an agency requests a list of qualified people from the appropriate OPM register. For some positions, the individual may apply directly to a Federal agency. The agency may then interview and select the person for the vacancy.

Temporary Trial Appointment. Applicants who are physically disabled or mentally restored may receive a temporary appointment not to exceed 700 hours to demonstrate ability to perform the duties of a position. The 700-hour trial

appointment authority gives mentally restored individuals an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to perform the duties of a position. Applicants must meet the minimum qualifications standards, including taking and passing a written test if required. This is a temporary appointment which may lead to either an excepted position or a competitive appointment through regular procedures.

Appointment for Physically Disabled. An individual with a severe physical disability may receive an appointment under special procedures for employment of people with disabilities. Federal agencies may use either competitive or special appointing authorities. Realistic physical standards, based on the actual tasks of a position, require that applicants possess only the minimum medical qualifications necessary for safe and efficient performance of the duties of a particular position. Reasonable accommodations may also be considered in determining an applicant's ability to perform the duties of a job.

Appointment for People Who Are Mentally Restored. Applicants disadvantaged because of psychiatric disability evidenced by professional treatment and disrupted education and employment within the previous two years may be appointed to any position for which they meet basic qualifications. The expected appointment authority is for mentally restored persons who (a) have a documented history of mental illness which was treated within the previous two years, (b) are unemployed, and (c) have been certified directly to a position by a state VR or Veterans Administration counselor. Applicants must meet the minimum qualification standards, including taking and passing a written test if required. This appointing authority provides employment of up to two years and includes the time served under the 700-hour trial appointment. Individuals wishing to continue in Federal service must be appointed through the appropriate competitive examination procedure(s) or be eligible for other noncompetitive appointing authorities; to assist individuals who have been restored to mental health gain work experience and confidence, the temporary trial appointment may be used.

Appointment for People Who Are Mentally Retarded. An applicant who is mentally retarded may be given a competitive appointment from a list of eligible candidates maintained by the Office of Personnel Management (1981, 1990), or an appointment under special procedures for employment for people with disabilities. The agency may use special appointing techniques for persons who are mentally retarded, and have been certified directly to a position by a state VR counselor as being competent and capable of performing the duties of the position.

Appointment for 30% Disabled Veterans. A veteran with a compensable service disability of 30% or more may receive an appointment to any position for

which he/she qualifies. This candidate should be certified by a state VR agency or the Veterans Administration.

Veterans Readjustment Appointment. Veterans who served in the military service during the Vietnam era and have less than 14 years education may receive a veterans readjustment appointment to positions for which they qualify at grade nine and below or Wages Grade equivalent position (Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972, as Amended).

Special Accommodation on the Job. Every effort should be made by the referring counselor for the success of the individual who is disabled. It may be necessary or advisable for the government to make a reasonable accommodation in the duties of a job or in the work site to make it easier for the individual to perform the duties of a position. The VR or Veterans Administration counselor may use the following types of accommodations: (a) interpreters for persons with hearing impairments, (b) readers for persons with visual impairments, (c) modification of job duties, (d) restructuring of work sites, (e) alteration of work schedules, (f) special equipment or furniture acquisition, and (g) personal assistance when needed.

Testing. When appropriate, the Office of Personnel Management uses special examination procedures for applicants who are physically disabled to assure that their abilities are properly assessed and that they are not discriminated against because of their impairments. Special testing arrangements are determined on an individual basis depending on the applicant's disability: (a) readers, examination in braille, tape or large print for visually impaired competitors; (b) interpreters for test instructions, modification of parts of the test for those who are hearing impaired, and (c) extra time to complete the test for motor impaired persons.

Conversion to Competitive Services. After two years of successful performance in a continuing position, an employee serving in the excepted service may be noncompetitively converted to a competitive appointment upon the recommendation of his/her supervisor.

Unpaid Federal Work Experience. The state VR counselor may arrange an unpaid worker/service in a competitive environment after the client has finished training in an academic or sheltered facility. The counselor should contact the Personnel Officer or the Selective Placement Program Manager to set up the work experience. This experience should be tailored to suit each client. Unpaid work experience may be provided to clients of the state VR agency and individual clients of the Department of Veterans Affairs. An exemplary program has been established by the Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services and the

Tennessee Valley Authority called the Federal Unpaid Work Experience Program. The project is intended to make employers aware of the untapped talents and abilities of individuals with disabilities who are severely disabled and committed to learning vocational skills.

United States Postal Service. The hiring process for disabled persons can be implemented only upon approval of the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the U.S. Postal Service. If approved, hiring under the noncompetitive process does not involve a written postal exam; however performance tests will be given. Applicants must meet applicable standards for postal employment. Consideration is given to prior employment records and conviction records, if any (U.S. Postal Service, 1990).

State Initiatives

A RehabNet request was sent to all states inquiring of their initiatives to hire persons with disabilities. These are the responses of some states that submitted a reply.

Wisconsin

Handicapped Expanded Certification (HEC). HEC is an affirmative action personnel procedure used to assure that qualified persons with disabilities are among the applicants to be considered for state civil service positions. 'Qualified' means having the minimum qualifications required for a job as demonstrated by passing a civil service exam (see exception under the waiver section below).

The program is for persons who are considered 'vocationally handicapped'—persons with disabilities which substantially limit their employment opportunities, i.e., their ability to obtain and/or retain employment, are eligible for HEC. It is not just the presence of a disability which makes the person eligible. There must also be reason to believe that the disability will cause the individual to have employment difficulties. The following are examples of disabilities that may result in substantial difficulty for the affected person in obtaining or retaining employment: (a) speech impairments, (b) complete paralysis, (c) hearing impairments, (d) convulsive disorders, (e) orthopedic impairments, (f) missing extremities, (g) dyslexia, (h) partial paralysis, (i) developmental disabilities, and (j) mental/emotional illness.

How does HEC work? Basic Certification is where the top-ranked candidates are determined from the examination and those who will be considered for employment are identified. People with disabilities may be included in this group without using the expanded certification process. The Expanded Certification process is where the names of the three top-ranked

candidates using HEC are then added to the above-mentioned group. To be added to this group, each HEC applicant must pass the civil service examination.

To apply for HEC, the following steps are required:

1) Determination of a vocational handicap: Does the disability cause the individual substantial difficulty in obtaining a job?

2) Check the box for Handicapped Expanded Certification (HEC) on the application for State Employment.

3) Take the appropriate Civil Service Exam.

4) If the applicant is among the highest scoring candidates, he/she may be contacted for an interview.

5) If the interview results in a job offer, the applicant may be asked to provide verification of his/her disability.

6) If hired, the applicant may discuss job accommodation needs or needs for other kinds of assistance with the supervisor.

Examination Accommodations and Waivers. Accommodations: Persons with some types of physical or mental disabilities may need an accommodation in order to take one or more types of state civil service exams. Examples of accommodations which may be requested are: (a) readers, writers, large print exams or use of tape recorders and tapes for persons with visual impairments, (b) American Sign Language interpretation for persons with hearing impairments, and (c) extended time for persons with motor coordination impairments. Waivers: Examination waivers may be appropriate for persons with certain disabilities, e.g., mental retardation, where the person's qualifications for a job cannot be adequately measured by the standard civil service exams. Two documents are needed to consider a request for examination waivers (Wisconsin DVR, 1988).

Louisiana

The Department of Civil Service, which establishes the rules and regulations for state employment, has incorporated in the rules a provision for waiving the competitive appointment of rehabilitation clients. Under this rule a rehabilitation counselor can request the Director of Civil Services to waive the competitive written examination that is required for most state classified positions (M. Carlock, personal communication, April 24, 1991).

Florida

Each agency under the auspices of the State Merit System is required to submit annual affirmative action plans which assure equal employment opportunity compliance in hiring practices. In instances where an individual with a disability is referred to an employing state agency by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or Blind Services, there is an established agreement between one of the Divisions and the employing state agency, and provisions are initiated that allow for development of trainee status positions for the person with a disability.

Trainee status is provided to an individual who is appointed to a full- or part-time position for which he/she does not meet the minimum training and experience requirements, and who have no qualifications upon which a request or approval of equivalent training and experience may be based. Trainee status is applicable during a working trainee period in which the individual learns the job and gains the experience and training needed to fully qualify for the position to which appointed. Upon completion of the training program, if the individual meets the minimum qualifications for the class, the employee may be appointed with probationary status (W. C. Melton, personal communication, April 24, 1991).

Georgia

The Alternative Employment Program was established as a pilot program in October, 1988, through the collaborative efforts of the members of the Georgia General Assembly, the Georgia Department of Human Resources and the Georgia State Merit System of Personnel Administration. Because of the direct assessment and linking of applicants with physical disabilities and specific state positions by trained RES professionals, the new program is viewed as a proactive alternative to the standard process to streamline and enhance employment of applicants with physical disabilities in Georgia State Government. Eligibility for the Alternative Program is based primarily on the severity of the physical impairment. A severe physical impairment is one that is relatively permanent and seldom capable of being fully corrected by medical treatment, therapy or surgical means (E. Johnson, personal communication, April 24, 1991).

Michigan

The Michigan Department of Civil Service may be considered a placement resource for clients. Qualified clients may compete through the standard examination process. There are also three special procedures available for persons with disabilities to access state employment. These consist of (a) the Six-Month Trial Appointment Program, (b) the Handicapped Designation Program, and (c) the Return to Work of Injured Employees Program.

Six-Month Trial Appointment Program Eligibility. A client who would be competitively disadvantaged in a standard written examination and has a disability which cannot be accommodated in the testing situation may be certified for the program. The Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the Michigan Commission for the Blind are the certifying agencies. A person with a disability need not be a client to obtain certification. Examinations which consist of an oral appraisal or a ranking of experience and education are excluded from the program.

Handicapped Designation Program Eligibility. To be eligible for this program, a person must have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, have a record of such impairment, or be regarded as having such an impairment and be accepted by the Handicapped Program Coordinator as meeting criteria established by the Michigan Equal Opportunity Council. Handicapped designation entitles the applicant to be considered for employment through (a) the standard referral process which allows for utilization of the expanded certification process for protected groups, (b) reasonable accommodation necessary for standard examination(s); and (c) rescheduled examination(s) for affirmative action purposes when conditions for such exist (Civil Service determines whether an employer may utilize this process). A client need not be eligible for the Six-Month Trial Appointment Program to qualify for the Handicapped Designation Program.

Return to Work of Injured Employees Eligibility. State employees who have incurred injuries or illnesses and are not able to return to work after a short period may qualify for assistance through this program. Usually, these employees are receiving workers' compensation, long-term disability, or disability retirement (P. Griswold, personal communication, April 24, 1991).

Alabama

All of the hiring is done via the State Personnel Department. The state has a procedure which a person with a disability may use to be certified for employment. Presently, when a vacancy occurs, a state agency requests a register to fill the vacancy. A register is a list of the top ten applicants, usually rated on training and experience. The department must make selections from the register. However, if a department desires to hire a person with a disability and he/she is not in the top ten applicants on the register, the employee submits a 'Handicapped Preference Certification' which allows the person entry into the top ten listings which permits the individual to be hired. The person with the disability must meet the minimum qualifications on the job.

The Alabama Division of Rehabilitation is responsible for certification of the 'Handicapped Preference Certification'. They market this procedure through meetings with the personnel officers of the department and through their Employment Development Coordinators who are involved with job development and job placement for people with disabilities (L. Lucas, personal communication, April 25, 1991).

Implications

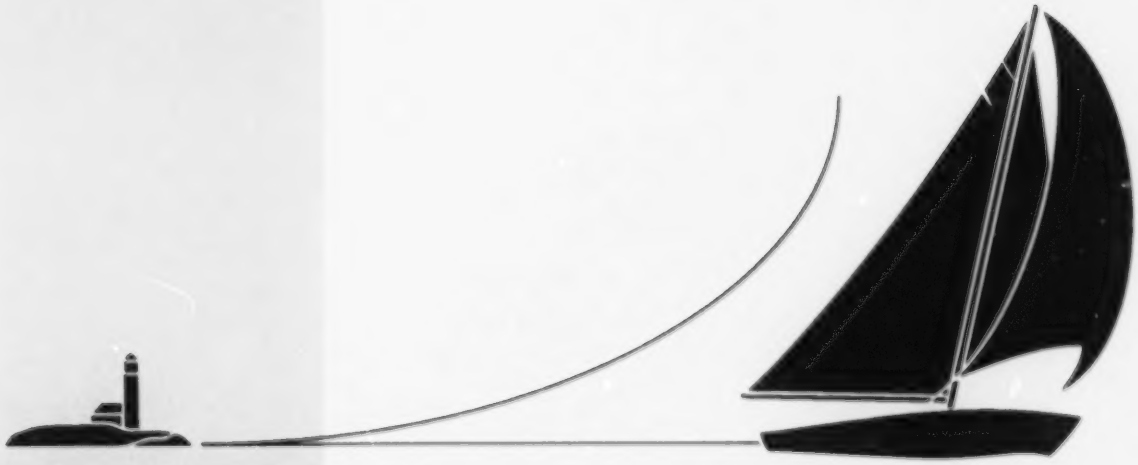
The state-federal VR system has promoted employment for individuals with disabilities for over seventy years. During this time, much progress has been made in creating new job opportunities through new legislation, better awareness by employers, changing labor markets, empowerment of consumers along with many others. Throughout this time many new and innovative programs have expanded services to new clientele which has led to an increasing number of persons with disabilities participating in the competitive labor market. This trend continues at the present time at an accelerated pace with much promise for populations with disabilities.

This chapter has provided a description of a number of programs and projects that impact job opportunities for people with disabilities. These programs have been initiated by both the private and public sectors including the state and federal governments. State rehabilitation agencies, beginning with agency administrators, will want to review and study these programs to determine which ones will be of the most benefit in meeting their needs in the area of employer services.

Recent legislation including ADA mandates that rehabilitation and employers work together to implement and meet the intent of the law. It is clear that both employers and rehabilitation can benefit from these initiatives with employers receiving good workers and rehabilitation good placement for persons with disabilities. Technology has also created many new jobs, especially in the service areas, many of which can be performed by individuals with disabilities provided some modifications are made in the areas of access, work stations, and egress.

Chapter 5

Strategies in Employer Services



Strategies in Employer Services

Objectives

Present a wide range of on-going and planned employer services.

Discuss a number of disability awareness methods that could be of use to rehabilitation agencies with employers.

Present a review of innovative employer options, marketing, accommodations and disability management that can be used in the provision of services to employers.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of a number of employer strategies which include disability awareness, employment options, marketing outreach, accommodations, disability management, career development, accessibility, safety and follow-up. A variety of subtopics are covered under each of the general categories to provide specific information about strategies that can be adapted or replicated in other settings.

Discussion

Productive employer relationships are a vital part of the total rehabilitation process. To develop productive employer relationships, methods of working with business and industry should emphasize the needs of the employer rather than the needs of the rehabilitation professional. Looking at a true marketing approach to employer services, one must realize there is no single strategy that is used by all employer developers. Support services are crucial to the client in obtaining/maintaining employment. It is the responsibility of the rehabilitation counselor to listen and respond to the employer as well as to the needs of the individuals being served.

Good communication skills and flexibility of the professional serving the employer are key attributes towards the success of productive employer relationships. By providing business and industry with employer services that address their needs and concerns, the rehabilitation counselor will begin to create a trustworthy employer relationship.

The continued development of assistive technology brings forth additional employment opportunities allowing for reasonable job accommodation, valued

employee retention and the creation of increasing home-based employment.

The reality of a shortage of workers is alarming to employers. The pool of qualified skilled workers is decreasing yet the number of skilled jobs are increasing. There is a need for employer development that creates a positive image within the business and industry community. Employers are in need of disability awareness education regarding the abilities of rehabilitation clients. Through education, employers will also become aware of rehabilitation as a resource to augment their personnel recruitment efforts and to assist with employee retention.

Disability Awareness

Today media attention focusing on people with disabilities has significantly increased the awareness of the general public. Further, employers are becoming involved in many activities that enlighten society toward people with disabilities (Tate, 1987). There are several approaches that can be used to create a greater awareness of disabilities. A number of these are presented in the following sections.

Windmills

Windmills is a program developed by the California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons. Windmills is a systematic modular training program to address the lack of information that many individuals have about disabilities. The series of fourteen one-hour modules provides opportunities for trainee participation to examine attitudes and beliefs about people with disabilities and disability experiences, and are particularly relevant to the employment environment. Information about the Windmills Program is available from The Foundation on Employment and Disabilities, Inc., 3820 Del Amo Boulevard, Suite 304, Torrance, CA 90503, (213) 214-3430.

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and Governor's Committees

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD) is a national organization based in Washington, DC, whose purpose is to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Established in 1947 by Presidential Proclamation, the Committee works to promote employment for people with disabilities through the participation of some 600 voluntary organizations and individuals from civic organizations, veterans groups, the professions, people with disabilities, employers, labor and trade associations, and other groups. The organization publishes a quarterly magazine, Worklife, which focuses on employment information appropriate for both employers and people with disabilities. For information contact the Chief of Publications, PCEPD, 1111

20th Street, NW, Room 636, Washington, DC 20036-3470.

A recent videotape, 'Part of the Team—People with Disabilities in the Workforce,' produced by PCEPD, International Business Machines, and the National Easter Seal Society, is a valuable tool for use in awareness interventions with employers. The video emphasizes how workers with disabilities can help employers meet the challenges of the 21st Century. The presentation is designed to help the potential employer:

> recognize people with disabilities as strong contenders for almost any job—from running heavy machinery to running an international corporation
>
> understand natural fears about hiring people with disabilities and become more at ease
>
> see that employees with disabilities can be promoted and they can be fired—just like anyone else
>
> learn about job accommodations, from specialized computer programs to raised desks for wheelchair users, and
>
> get information on free resources to help make people with disabilities a productive part of a winning team.

For further information on the videotape which is available at a very low cost, contact National Easter Seal Society, Communications Department, 70 East Lake Street, Chicago, IL 60601, (312) 726-6200, TDD (312) 726-4258.

Ready, Willing and Able is a recently produced booklet especially designed for small employers that covers topics such as meeting and evaluating the candidate, deciding what the job is, accommodations, people support systems, and career paths. The booklet is available from the Chief of Publications, PCEPD, 1111 20th Street, NW, Room 636, Washington, DC 20036-3470.

Several states have Governor's Committees for Employment of People with Disabilities that are actively involved in the same general mission as PCEPD, but operate in association with PCEPD at the state level. Information about these committees may be obtained through any state governor's office.

Corporate Materials

Several major U.S. corporations have become actively involved in employment initiatives for workers with disabilities and also contribute to increased awareness through their commercials and media activities. One of the

more visible corporations has been DuPont through its surveys of workers and commercials featuring persons with disabilities. For information and a copy of the DuPont survey, write DuPont, Attn: G51932, P. O. Box 80029, Wilmington, DE 19880-1129, 1-800-527-2601.

Another nationally visible corporation that has featured people with disabilities is McDonald's. Ed Rensi (1990), Chief Executive of McDonald's, writing in Worklife reported:

> We know it's good business to recognize our disabled customers, but we think it's even better business to recognize people with disabilities as talented—committed—and productive employees. So McDonald's is working to provide disabled individuals with another type of access to our restaurants—access to mainstream, competitive employment (p. 19).

McDonald's established its McJobs program in 1981 to emphasize a strong commitment to recruiting workers with disabilities.

Days Inns of America, Sears, General Motors, Marriott, and Burger King are nationally recognized employers that have created successful programs directed towards the recruitment of individuals with disabilities. In looking at the success of these programs and understanding local labor market needs, there is an opportunity for innovative employer services. The counselor may contact local business and industry and, based on needs, coordinate the development of similar programs.

Business, Industry, and Labor Councils

A successful strategy for developing increased awareness in the employment community is the business, industry, and labor council. Councils developed in the community are to (a) facilitate greater understanding of workers with disabilities, (b) assist in the identification of employment opportunities, and (c) obtain the advise and direction of the employment community in employment preparation and job development/placement services. These councils are an integral component to the Projects with Industries program (discussed elsewhere in the document) and have been established by many rehabilitation agencies to increase their visibility among employers.

Other Initiatives

A number of other possibilities are available to assist in disability awareness activities with the employment community. It is possible to note one exciting opportunity that is rapidly becoming available. More and more cable

television operations make available public access networks for community affairs. An innovative program, 'People First,' has been established with a public access station in Saint Cloud Minnesota (Zaleski, 1989). The program deals with a wide range of topics related to disability and was put together with volunteer help.

Innovative Employment Options

Home-based Employment

The idea of the traditional work place being a fixed space with regular hours and a structured job setting is changing. Large corporations are giving employees the option to work from their homes. Home-based employment is attractive because of new technologies such as FAX and communications technologies. Home-based employment has helped to allow increased manpower to enter the workforce, especially women with children and individuals with disabilities.

Job Sharing

Another employment option that allows two or more workers to share a job is called job sharing. This concept permits workers to perform work with fewer hours per week. By practicing job sharing, individuals with physical limitations or stress-related disabilities will have adequate time to work at least part-time.

Modified Work Schedule

Flexible work schedules are terms that apply to the modification of hours spent on the job to accommodate individuals with disabilities as well as other needs in a worker's life such as child care.

A modified work schedule implies an employer/employee relationship and should not be confused with independent contractor or home-based business. Many workers who collect or process information are officially authorized to work at home. Flexible workplace arrangements have proven beneficial to employers in terms of leasing costs for traditional office space, especially with the rapidly rising cost of maintaining office buildings.

Supported Employment Programs

Supported employment programs have been successful in creating competitive employment opportunities for rehabilitation clients with severe disabilities. New strategies have been developed to ensure the success of these employment opportunities and to reduce the cost of the program to rehabilitation. The Michigan Rehabilitation Services, working closely with the Job Training and

Placement Act, has developed a supported employment program agreement. Under this agreement, Rehabilitation Services cover the cost of the first 100 hours of job coaching. JTPA covers the cost of the second 100 hours and Rehabilitation services covers any job-coaching needs over the 200 hours. This agreement allows for clients to receive the necessary job-coaching to develop skills for maintaining employment. However, there is still a need for on-going support services at the workplace.

Transition from School to Work

The goal of transitional programs is to plan and assist secondary students with disabilities to become productive. During this process, interagency collaboration and coordination among schools, adult agencies, VR and other community-based organizations are very important. Family involvement is crucial for the success of transition.

Transitional planning is a shared responsibility among agencies since no one agency has all the necessary resources to serve these individuals as they move from school to the adult community.

Counselors may use summer youth work experiences as a situational work assessment and pre-vocational evaluation to determine feasible vocational goals for students with disabilities. Individual vocational training programs, on-the-job evaluation or training, supported employment, vocational training centers and other training resources may be used to achieve a successful transition for the students.

On-the-Job Training

The Job Training and Placement Act continues to develop innovative programs that relate to the changing trends of today's workforce and provide employment opportunities for the future.

One program has been developed to serve the educationally and economically disadvantaged drop-out youth. It prepares these individuals for successful employment opportunities by providing them with a chance to enter the vocational technical education system combined with job training and support services.

Another program targets youth who are at risk of dropping out of school. The purpose of this program is to encourage high school retention and completion for youth ages 16-21 as identified by high school or rehabilitation counselors. The program provides the students with ten hours of work experience each week after school. The supervised work sites provide support and encouragement to the

students. The students earn a paycheck, establish a local work history and references and begin to understand the world of work. JTPA programs may be available to dislocated workers, including individuals with disabilities, who have lost employment due to plant closings or lay-off. This program allows for individuals to acquire job skills and employment credentials which will allow them to re-enter the labor force.

Apprenticeship Program

Maintaining a competitive edge and having a skilled workforce are important components to the success of business and industry. Apprenticeship training programs are designed to address these factors.

An employer developer or counselor can provide a valuable employer service that is mutually beneficial. This service is to assist in the development of a coordinated effort between local colleges, vocational technical centers and employers to promote a successful apprenticeship class that responds to the needs of business and industry.

Many employers look to their existing workforce for apprenticeship trainees. This could benefit rehabilitation by creating entry-level positions for clients with possible opportunities for future apprenticeship training programs.

Temporary Services

The use of temporary help, or contract persons, has become an avenue for employment for some individuals with disabilities. Clients may choose to take a temporary employment position if a permanent job is non-existent. Benefits to clients who are employed through a temporary service include on-the-job experience, opportunity to see the actual work of various companies and development of a current work history. Temporary employment situations may lead to permanent full-time positions.

Corporations are using temporary help to meet peak workloads. This prevents companies from going through the hassle of hiring and firing employees. Further, more workers are willing to work as temporaries because it offers a flexible schedule—workers can choose to work part-time or full-time, and parents who may have to work on their regular jobs during the day can work for a temporary agency on the weekends or in the evenings to help support their families. A flexible work schedule permits workers with disabilities to work who might not be able to work everyday or on a full-time basis.

Older Worker

The 'Aging of America' has been a much publicized phenomenon that impacts significantly on employment. The declining birthrate and increasing life expectancy have resulted in a greater percentage of the population in the older age bracket. Interestingly, this population is characterized by both early retirement and extended employment beyond the usual retirement age. Because of the removal of mandatory retirement limits by federal legislation, employers have been required to continue the employment of those individuals who remain qualified to perform their job duties.

As the older worker remains employed or returns to an employment situation, VR may be called upon to provide services to employers related to valued employee retention and/or job accommodation allowing the older worker to maintain employment.

JTPA has developed an older workers' program to provide services to eligible individuals and to place them into unsubsidized employment. The older worker is placed in a meaningful part-time or full-time position. The individual is pre-screened to match open employment positions, usually resulting in a successful placement.

Women, Minorities, and Native Americans

Women, minorities, and native Americans represent population segments that have received increased attention in the labor market. Women have moved into almost all aspects of the workforce in significant numbers. Minorities, including ethnic and racial groups, are expected to represent the labor market growth sector of the future. Native Americans have become recognized as targets for special rehabilitation initiatives. Each of these populations is having a major effect on the changing diversity of the workforce and requires special attention. Increased attention will be given to the recruitment of individuals with disabilities who represent one of these groups.

Marketing Outreach

Marketing is customer satisfaction 'engineering' which entails researching the customer's wants, needs, and concerns in maintaining a competitive edge. To be successful, rehabilitation professionals must become knowledgeable of these wants, needs, and concerns. The provision of timely employer services that address the customer's needs is crucial to successful employer relationships. To maintain a creditable relationship, the employer developer must effectively prescreen clients to match employers' job requirements.

Interagency Collaboration

Limited financial resources available to agencies make it necessary to establish interagency networking. This will assist rehabilitation to serve more people with disabilities. Interagency collaboration should start with the administrator and extend to the VR counselor. VR counselors must be aware of the services offered in the community and should work closely with these resources to establish networking. The VR counselor is a link between the client and services, and it is critical for the counselor to understand the agency's function in the community. To facilitate interagency collaboration, the agency supervisor needs to encourage the counselors by offering them the tools such as time or organizational fees. A good networking practice among the agencies is beneficial to employers, VR counselors, and clients.

Vocational Rehabilitation Employer Services

VR agencies provide a variety of employer services to business and industry. They may refer the employer to another resource that may be of assistance. Employer services may include:

Affirmative Action Assistance. Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 95-112) allows VR to assist employers in complying with the legislation. VR counselors may serve as sources of information for employers on accessibility standards.

Job Analysis and Job Restructuring. Other services such as job analysis and job restructuring enable the agency to understand job tasks to develop appropriate training programs. This information can help employers update job descriptions and accommodate people with disabilities.

Disability Awareness Training. Disability awareness training is an effective tool for assisting employers in integrating employees with disabilities into the workforce.

On-the-job Training. On-the-job training is another service that can be used for placement and employment purposes.

Recruitment and Screening. Rehabilitation personnel can provide employers recruitment and screening services by referring prescreened individuals whose skills match job descriptions.

Workers' Compensation Case Assistance. Rehabilitation personnel can also assist employers to retain employees who incur a disability on the job.

Counseling and Follow-up. Counseling and follow-up are valuable services available to employers.

Public Relations

The competitive labor market requires VR counselors to be involved in public relations with employers and in the community. This may be acceptable by memberships in business oriented organizations. Increased involvement by rehabilitation professionals results in a better informed business and industrial community.

Business oriented networks often evolve from relations with the following organizations and groups:

Department of Commerce Policy Committees

Business/Education Partnership Councils

Community Growth Alliances

Industrial Development Councils

Human Resource Personnel Associations

Manufacturers' Task Forces

Employer Advisory Councils

Employer Recognition

Greater visibility in the community may be accomplished by special recognition of employers who hire workers with disabilities and have worked closely with the VR agency. The visibility can be increased through the use of media such as local newspapers, radio, and TV coverage.

Job Banks

The job bank is another job development tool that has proven effective. Job banks are organized systems for keeping information on employment opportunities. These help job developers to communicate with employers since job bank lists include such information as company name, address, phone numbers, contact person, type of jobs, and pay.

Model Programs

New Port Richey, Florida

The method that is being used in New Port Richey Division of VR in dealing with employers has resulted in many successful job placements. This has helped clients to obtain and maintain gainful employment. The most effective approach has been the creation of the Pasco Interagency Screening Committee for Employment Services (PISCES). This committee carries a strong message among local employers that workers with disabilities should be given a chance for employment. PISCES is designed for people with disabilities only and is an interagency collaborative effort among VR and community based organizations.

PISCES includes, but is not limited to, the Private Industry Council (JTPA), Human Development Center (Mental Health Center), School Board of Pasco, Job Services of Florida, Goodwill Industries, Association for Retarded Citizens of Pasco and the Department of Human and Rehabilitation Services. This network has resulted in staffing of over one hundred-fifty clients with disabilities with the positive outcome of placing these clients in good jobs. These joint ventures result in prompt services to clients and prevent costly duplications. With PISCES there is more coordination among the committee members for the benefit of employers.

Another effective tool that New Port Richey Vocational Rehabilitation has developed is employer awareness training. The VR office, in cooperation with other organizations, invites employers to the office to ask about their hiring practices and discuss job openings. This is beneficial to the rehabilitation counselors since they are exposed to specific information about the company, and they have an opportunity for personal contact with the employer. Employers learn more about disabilities through interaction with the counselors.

Membership of counselors in organizations such as the Government Employment Alliance, Committee of 100, Chamber of Commerce and the Pasco Disability Council allows them to market their services to new employers.

Using the tools discussed above, New Port Richey VR counselors have been able to successfully place their clients. VR agencies and counselors should be in the forefront in working closely with local employers and use on-the-job training, job coaching, apprenticeship programs and other supportive services to fully prepare their clients for the labor market of the future.

Throughout the 1990s, networking with community organizations, especially employers, is going to be necessary. For the past year, the Florida Model has been very effective in realizing improved working relationships with employers and achieving competitive employment for clients.

Port Huron, Michigan

A quest to explore the ramifications of creating an employer developer position within a rehabilitation agency began as the result of the agency's perceived need to solidify relationships with the employer community. Historically, the agency has concentrated on what the agency needed (rehabilitation goals) rather than the employer's needs and concerns.

Rehabilitation professionals continue to spend a limited amount of time on placement related activities as a result of other pressing job responsibilities related to caseloads. As a consequence, they do not have much contact with, or knowledge of the labor market. It is evident, however, that rehabilitation practitioners must increase customer satisfaction and bring about a more positive image by being responsive to employers and clients.

The Employer Development Representative Program (EDRP) has given rehabilitation placement a competitive edge. This program was designed to correlate with the client case service format while recognizing the employer as the customer.

The following activities have been developed for the job description of the EDRP:

Identify employers who are most likely to need, be interested in, and benefit from Michigan Rehabilitation Services employer services and will use EDRP as a resource to address their needs and concerns. This activity is ongoing and plays an important part in the success of EDRP business and employer contacts.

Identify employers through the use of target market parameters. This is seen as a necessary objective that will provide positive impact in relation to successful rehabilitations.

Identify the appropriate contact person. This activity is important to the development of successful business and employer relationships with the EDRP.

Develop positive ongoing relationships with employers. The importance of this to the success and impact of the EDRP is evident as mutual benefits are accomplished. The development of relationships with employers takes several months and is viewed as a long-term process.

Provide services and follow-up to employers, as related to their needs

and concerns as identified in the Individual Employer Services Plan. Services and follow-up to employers must be provided in a timely manner. This speaks to the development of positive relationships with employers and to the credibility of the EDRP.

Assess feasibility of employer and rehabilitation services relationships. Through employer relationship building, the EDRP assess mutual benefit achievement to determine if the continuation of the relationship is feasible.

To have employers view rehabilitation services as a resource for qualified applicants and employee retention. As a trusting relationship is developed, employers will see rehabilitation services as a reliable resource to assist them with employee retention and new employee opportunities.

Develop a communication network with counselors. A viable communication network and positive relationship between counselors and EDRPs are necessary for a successful program.

Provide assessment and review of employer marketing techniques with counselors. This provides counselors with an understanding of how the EDRP works with businesses/employers, and with an understanding of the 'marketing driven approach.' This assists counselors to become comfortable with a marketing strategy that focuses on employers.

Develop a networking system where area agencies provide services to employers. This is ongoing and enables the EDRP to broker effective up-to-date information to employers.

Develop knowledge of state and Federal programs designed to assist employers with their economic development needs. The EDRP must have a working knowledge of economic development programs and be able to utilize this knowledge to address employers' needs and concerns.

Maintain communication linkages between area office, employers, and the Economic Development Unit at the state office level. These linkages are useful resources to the EDRP. The Economic Development Unit and area office provide the EDRP with beneficial information regarding Economic Development Training Programs and seminars that are being developed.

The counselors and EDRPs have separate parameters for caseload services. The counselor continues to have the client as customer, while the EDRP has the employer as customer. **Figure 1** illustrates these responsibilities.

Figure 1

Counselor and Employer Development Representative Roles and Responsibilities

Counselor	*Employer Development Representative*
1. Client caseload	1. Employer caseload
2. Responsible for client activities	2. Responsible for employer casework activities
3. Responsible for job readiness of clients	3. Responsible for Employer Services Network and developing positive rapport with employers
4. Responsible for activities, e.g., • Employer contacts • Employer relationships • Follow-up	4. Responsible for implementation of Employer Services Plan, e.g., • Employer contacts • Long-term relationship building with employers • Follow-up
5. Resource to employer developer • Disability trends • Feasible job trends per client ability	5. Resource to counselor and employer • Labor market trends • Knowledge of employer incentive program and contact persons

To determine the impact of the EDRP on business and industry, survey letters were sent to the sixty-four business and industry representatives with whom the EDRP has had contact. Thirty-two responses (50%) were returned. In summary, the responses indicated that:

The program has been beneficial and benefits cited include education, resource information and increased awareness of Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

Employers indicated they were satisfied with the responsiveness of the

EDRP and they would share the availability of the program with other employers.

Employers also indicated that they would use Michigan Rehabilitation Services to assist them with employee retention issues and as a resource for qualified applicants. One employer noted that their most reliable employees had come through the Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

Recommendations from employers surveyed indicated a need for Michigan Rehabilitation Services to better advertise and market the program.

Finally, a variety of client benefits have accrued as a direct result of this effort. Client satisfaction with rehabilitation services has increased. Clients have benefited from counselors up-to-date knowledge of local labor market needs, concerns, growth/non-growth areas, which has provided improved counseling and guidance towards more viable vocational goals. Clients have obtained quality employment with higher average wages, employee benefit packages and opportunities for advancement with their employers.

Tennessee Valley Authority Home-based Employment Program

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) provides employment opportunities for individuals with severe disabilities through its home-based employment program. This challenge was accepted by TVA and was put into effect by the Handicapped Services and Equal Opportunity Office in Knoxville through the local Tennessee Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The concept of Home-based Employment as referred to here is new, innovative, and progressive. It is different from other such programs in that it exists strictly for persons with severe disabilities. It uses the principles of sound business management practices, as if it were an organization for profit.

Home-based Employment, Inc., has a board of professional advisors and consultants with each member being a specialist in his/her respective field. The mission of Home-based Employment, Inc., is as follows:

To reach out to individuals with disabilities with information about home-based employment and to assist them with employment preparation, seeking, and obtaining gainful employment commensurate with individual education, work history, and skill level(s).

To establish a Hardware and Software Loan Closet, in conjunction with audio-visual teaching aids and technical phone support, thus, providing opportunity for continued education and employment readiness training

for persons with severe disabilities.

To establish effective lines of communication and rapport with the business community at large: to promote home-based employment as the viable alternative to conventional employment.

To develop and maintain such other services and activities as the membership deems necessary.

Unique software and documentation will be made available to members for training in that software. This software is defined as being designed for a particular business, i.e., medical, legal, construction, and other in-house software.

Each member of Home-based Employment, Inc., has an opportunity for training in such programs as problem solving, productivity, organizing, goals and responsibility, motivation, communication, leadership, time management, labor relations, and health and safety. Participants in these programs will be given proficiency examinations and will receive a certificate of completion for each training course taken.

The President's Council on Management Improvement addressed Pilot Flexible Work-Place Arrangements, including Home-based Employment in 1990. Also, the Social Security Administration (April, 1990) developed a Work Incentives Program for persons on Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Income who are interested in returning to work, but are afraid of losing benefits. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 provides equal employment opportunity rights for Americans with disabilities which includes home-based employment.

Accommodation

Accommodation is defined as a process which is considered from the beginning to the end of the rehabilitation program and applicable to cognitive, affective, and physical characteristics. A growing number of clients with severe disabilities require the development of a comprehensive approach to accommodation.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services

Michigan Rehabilitation Services has developed a Statewide Accommodation Implementation Plan to be completed in a five-year time frame. Implementation of this plan has been influenced by the successful utilization of accommodation services as tools to increase client performance and by the increased demand for client and employer services. The importance of

accommodation has been emphasized by ADA. Service delivery staff are responsible for and must be trained in the delivery of accommodation services that will address client and employer needs. The major objectives of Michigan's accommodation plan are as follows:

To develop staff knowledge and augment skills enabling them to address job accommodations issues

To develop local professional resource persons and an informational network to work as a team to address job accommodation issues

To determine and address local service delivery voids through periodic assessment of business and industry, staff and community agencies, and perception of necessary job accommodation services that have not been addressed

To increase employer awareness and acceptance of job accommodation services as they relate to employee retention and new employee hire

To meet employers' needs for job accommodation services

Job Accommodation Network

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) supplies information and alternatives about job accommodations that are available at a range of costs. JAN offers guidance and informative options by consultants asking pertinent questions of either the employer or employee. Proven accommodations from existing employers are filed in JAN's database as their primary resource. Information about JAN and the accommodation services may be obtained by calling 1-800-526-7234.

Interior Design and Accessibility

Interior design is now being called 'universal' or 'barrier free' design when addressing the needs of all individuals. Independent living centers, State Department of Labor Construction Code—Barrier Free Design, Mayors' Committees or disability non-profit organizations provide information on building codes.

Independent Living Programs

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) and other disability nonprofit programs offer community and employer education. These services can include accessibility surveys, sensitivity/awareness training, job analysis, technical assistance and mediation. A proper job analysis will evaluate the tasks involved and the worksite

itself. Professionals from the medical field will volunteer time at an ILC in order to make a worksite or home more accessible.

If an ILC is not available in your county, each state has an Independent Living Council and Governor's Committee to use as a resource. Some local municipalities also have Mayor's Committees that are available to discuss these issues.

Job Analysis and Worksite Review

Many times a well-intentioned employer will call a VR counselor or placement specialist with a job listing which is 'perfect' for someone with a specific disability, e.g., deafness. Employers may think of prospective employees by their disability or functional limitations instead of the job qualifications.

It is the responsibility of the job analyst to understand the 'essential job functions' as defined by the ADA. Without a proper job analysis, worksite review and accessibility survey, it will be more difficult to be successful in job development for clients.

Rehabilitation Engineers

Many states have rehabilitation engineers available to design assistive devices or accommodations at little or no cost to the individual (according to JAN, 50% of accommodations are under $50, and most of these are free; the next 19% are under $500). Since to be eligible for VR services each client must have a 'functional limitation,' reasonable accommodations for employment are often needed.

Mediation

If a client's disability becomes worse after becoming competitively employed, the VR agency may assist the client in retaining employment, and in purchasing technical assistance for accommodations.

If an employer is uninformed about the newness of the client's disability, he may feel frustrated and attempt to eliminate the 'problem,' i.e., the employee. Since this is against the law (Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which protects the employees of Federal contractors and Federally funded programs, and the recently enacted ADA, which applies to most private sector employers), an employer may find himself/herself facing a complaint filed with the Federal government. Since investigations are lengthy and tend to cease the productivity of

the employer's organization, it is often much easier and less expensive to hire a mediator. Many ILCs offer this service for a fee to the employer. Mediations, or the prognosis of a resolution, can be completed in as little as three to four hours.

Implications

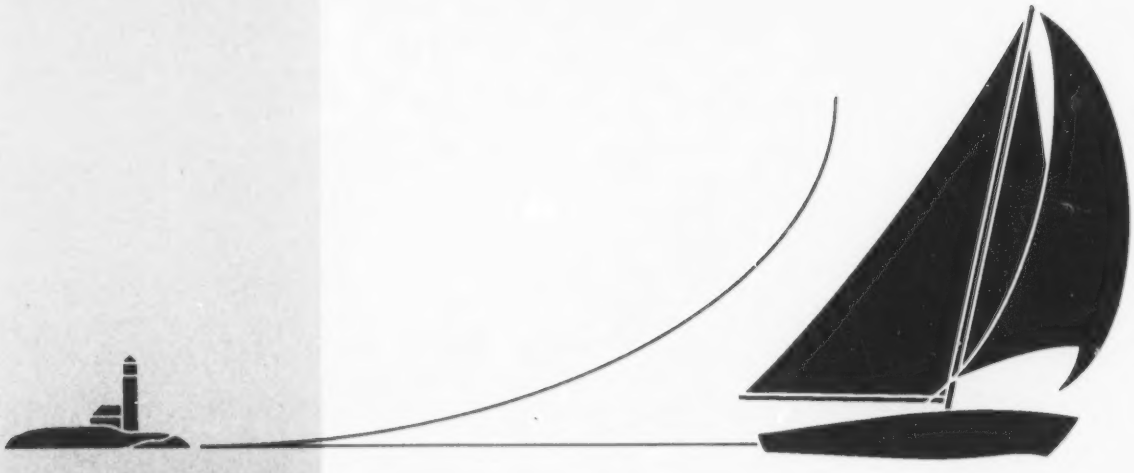
The issues and priorities presented in this chapter have definite implications for rehabilitation and for employer services. Agency administrators realize that positive relationships with employers are a major part of the total rehabilitation service system. It is, therefore, important that these relationships be established and nurtured for the mutual benefit of the employer, the rehabilitation professional, and the individual who is disabled.

The need for good communication skills, flexibility, awareness of disability, initiatives by employers, options for employment, movement from school to work, assistance to persons at work, and training of people for work (Train-Place and/or Place-Train) are stressed in this chapter.

The methods and strategies exist to insure collaboration between rehabilitation and employers but they have to be implemented to work. This will become more important as ADA and other legislation is enforced and consumers become more active. Should disagreements arise, methods are available to resolve problems that should not affect the working relationships.

Chapter 6

Use of the Document



Use of the Document

Objectives

Present guidelines for the development of training workshops, seminars and conferences for rehabilitation personnel and other interested professionals in strategies for innovative employer services.

Address administrative issues and concerns of both employers and VR agencies through a model training module emphasizing program descriptions, and the development of strategies to enhance initiation of innovative employer services.

Present information relevant to models, regulations, policy and legislation, service delivery systems, and adding viable contributions that both employers and VR can make to insure a successful training program.

Identify resources that can be used by staff development and other rehabilitation trainers to educate participants in a program of this nature which will increase communication, cooperation, and implementation of innovative employer service strategies.

Summary

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provided for new services, new programs and new populations including individuals with the most severe disabilities. This change in directions along with a changing labor market, workforce, an emerging international economy, deficits in skilled workers along with new legislation opened up an increasing number of employment opportunities for persons served by rehabilitation services. The implementation of such programs as Supported Employment, employer/VR cooperative efforts, Independent Living, among many others has made it possible for a number of persons with severe disabilities to enter or re-enter the world of gainful employment. These programs have resulted in many states entering into a closer working relationship with employers which, in most cases, proved to be mutually beneficial. Employers were provided with consultation and technical assistance in terms of employment of persons with disabilities while VR was able to meet its mandate of serving severely disabled populations. The intent of Congress that enacted this legislation for these programs was to improve the services to individuals with severe disabilities in order that these persons could participate and contribute to society to their level of maximum potential. The purpose of this document was to provide VR and

employers with information regarding innovative programs in operation that have proven effective in the employment of persons with disabilities and that can be duplicated/adapted to meet the needs of other VR agencies and/or related organizations. The agencies that have some of these programs in effect believe that they have contributed to a genuine close working relationship between VR and employers which has undone many misunderstandings and enhanced employment for persons with disabilities.

Many of the employer service strategies indicated in this document are not new, but many have been implemented only in limited locations. These include such approaches as job sharing, flex time, temporary help, home-based employment, job coaching, place/train, among a number of others. Many other programs have been designed to provide assistance with job placement including JTPA, Transition from School to Work, programs for the older worker, various marketing approaches and numerous local and state initiated programs. The document itself has left many issues unaddressed; however, it was not the intent of the manual to provide answers to all the issues, problems, and concerns that exist in the field. The following training module is presented to assist administrators, staff development personnel, and other trainers to implement a two-day, intense overview of innovative employer services and strategies that VR might use to better serve populations with disabilities.

Discussion/Training Module

This document has presented a philosophical and historical background regarding the development and expansion of employer services with specific attention to innovative programs that relate to the employment of persons with disabilities. It is the purpose of the suggested Training Module to present participants with information on challenges, strategies, interagency cooperation and approaches to employer services over a two-day span of time. It should be noted that this is only a guide and staff development and other rehabilitation trainers should modify, adapt or develop their own agenda to meet the specific goals and objectives established by their agency or organization. Trainers, of course, will want to review the list of participants in order to determine the level of the audience, and possible relationships that exist among the trainees to plan the activities that may be needed to encourage communication and exchange of ideas.

Implications/Conclusions

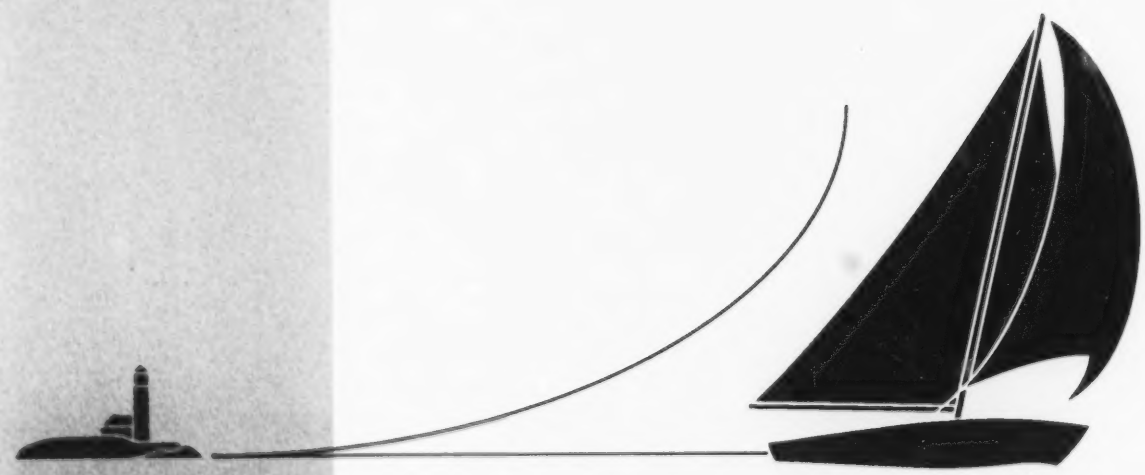
Staff training by all agencies is a necessity if success is to be achieved in the area of employer strategies. This is not an easy task since many hours of staff time and effort will be required by service providers, support staff, managers, administrators and employers. Programs with employers have many implications

for VR agencies as new approaches to placement are implemented, assessed and modified. Not only must approaches be changed but attitudes toward placement on the part of many rehabilitation personnel must be changed. The customary way of doing placement may prove inadequate as a result of changing populations, labor markets, legislation and many other factors. Change will not be easy but it must be done if individuals with disabilities are to live productive and rewarding lives.

INNOVATIVE EMPLOYER SERVICES PROGRAM MODULE

CONTENT	OUTCOME	MATERIALS	TRAINERS	EVALUATION
Introductions Welcome	Participants are provided with the goals and objectives of the program	Registration, IRI document, selected materials, lecture	Director of Training, Administrator	——
Overview of Employer Service Programs	Participants will receive a historical/ philosophical overview of employer services	IRI document, handouts, tape/slide video, lecture/ discussion	Director of Training, Employer	Pre/Post assessment
Challenges to VR Agencies by Employer Services	Participants will be given an overview of relevant challenges	IRI document, handouts, lectures/ discussion	Director of Training, VR Administrator, Employer	Pre/Post
Approaches to Delivery of Employment Services	Participants will review various approaches with attention to organization, staffing, relationships, results	IRI document, handouts, brochures, media (audio/ video), lecture/ discussion	Director of Training, Placement Specialist, VR Administrator	Pre/Post
Innovative Strategies in Employer Services	Participants will develop a better understanding of employer concerns and become more capable of responding to concerns as a result of knowledge of employer services/VR	IRI document, videotapes, handouts, small group discussions	Director, Employer, VR Administrator	Pre/Post
Wrap up	Participants will receive a synopsis of the program	Summary/ lecture	Director of Training	——

References



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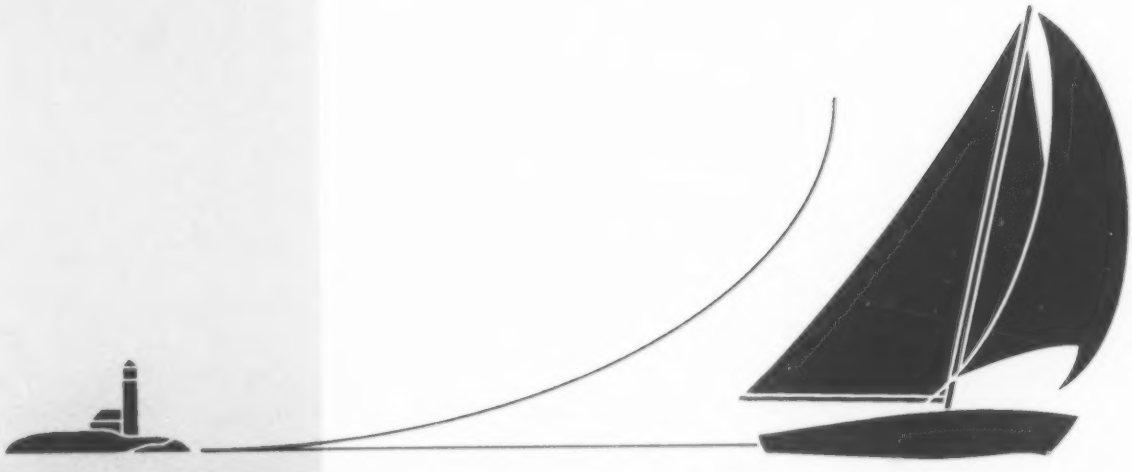
Appendices



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